



Letter 4: Update re. Covid 19 Response Plan

23rd October 2020

Dear Parent/Guardian and Staff Member,

As we approach the end of Term 1, I want to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the entire school community for all their efforts so far this year. Together, we have all managed to re-open our school, keep it open, and keep it running smoothly. It has been very challenging for everyone but we are not aware of any transmission within the school community to date. Where close contacts have been identified, they have all thankfully tested negative. This is down to the collective efforts of all students, parents/guardians, and school staff.

With the country moving to Level 5 restrictions, we are all aware that difficult times are ahead. Hopefully, our school community will not be significantly affected in the coming weeks and months. However, it is possible that there *may* be some confirmed cases of Covid-19 in our school community in the next term. While there is much coverage in the media at present about the efficiency of the HSE Contact Tracing System, I would like to detail again how the guidelines from the DES work on the ground.

The guidelines state that *'The response to confirmed cases or outbreaks of Covid-19 in the community or in a school is the responsibility of and will be led and managed by Public Health HSE. All decisions as to appropriate actions following a confirmed case or outbreak will be made by their teams in the context of a full Public Health Risk Assessment procedure according to the principles set out in the document in the link above. **Any actions to be taken by the school will be communicated directly by Public Health HSE. School management will be informed as and when such actions such as exclusion of children or staff; partial or full closure, are deemed necessary on public health grounds. If the school is not so informed, it has not been deemed necessary by Public Health.'***

This means that school leadership cannot take any action until instructed to by Public Health HSE. Even if a parent has informed the school that their child has tested positive, the school cannot take any action until instructed to do so by Public Health HSE. This places schools in an extremely difficult position, particularly if there is a delay between being informed by a parent and being contacted by the HSE. CDL has only been contacted once by the Public Health team, therefore you will have already received an official letter from Public Health via the school in early October. Further letters may follow if the school is instructed to send them by Public Health.

With this in mind, please do not contact the school seeking information or confirmation regarding possible cases of Covid-19 that **may** be active in our school community. The school will not discuss individual cases. If the school are contacted by Public Health HSE in relation to a confirmed case, a public health risk assessment will be undertaken and the parents/guardians of children deemed to be close contacts of the confirmed case will be contacted and advised accordingly. An official letter from Public Health HSE will be issued, and we will share this letter with the entire school community in a timely manner, via our website and text messaging platform. Further information on Covid-19 is available at: www.hpsc.ie and www.gov.ie

Each one of us are vulnerable to becoming infected with Covid-19 and unintentionally transmitting it to others. We endeavour to be empathetic and compassionate to all members of our school community should positive tests occur. None of us would like to think of our sons/daughters becoming infected and we need to remain

cognisant of this when communicating with others. We all need to model a compassionate response for students to reinforce this message.

There has been so much hard work and effort by everyone this term and I have only listed some of the highlights/developments/initiatives below

- The LC Class of 2020 received their *Calculated Grades* and they all did brilliantly (more than 10% achieved in excess of 500 points and more than 40% achieved in excess of 400 points). We are extremely proud of each and every one of the Class of 2020 and we hope that they are all flourishing in their chosen courses/pathways. This group were the first ever students of CDL and they had an extraordinary start and ending to their post-primary education. We wish them all well!
- A *Digital Leadership Team* has been established in the school and they have made great progress in ensuring that all staff and students are improving their competence and confidence with Office 365 (especially MS Teams). Staff also attended a training session with *Wriggle* in the use of MS Teams in early September. MS Teams will be the default application that all students and teachers will use in the event of another school closure. The *Digital Leadership Team* is also developing guidelines for both students and staff in *remote learning*.....just in case!
- The *Student Council* have been extremely busy since the commencement of the academic year. They have had a huge input in to policy review and development. They have also approved the Covid-19 Response Plan developed by the school (available on the school website).
- The Wellbeing Team organised a fantastic *Mental Health Week* from Monday 19th to Friday 23rd October 2020.
- The school produced and published a *Virtual Tour* which is on the school website. The link was distributed to the sixth class teachers of the feeder primary schools. You can check it out on the school website.
- Ten external student benches (made exclusively from recycled plastic bottles) have been installed in the courtyard at the back of the school.
- The school had a *Fire Drill* (in accordance with Fire Safety legislation) and it went brilliantly.
- The sixth year and third year students have engaged in study skills workshops with *Amazing Brains*.
- The *Transition Year* students had a really successful first week of work experience. Feedback from all employers was so positive. They represented themselves and their school so well!
- Enrolment for First Year 2021-2022 opened on 2nd October and closed at 12pm on 23rd October 2020. The school is oversubscribed again (there were more 300 applications for 150 places). The first round of offers will issue after the midterm break.
- The school is currently planning the LC Examinations for students who opted to sit their LC 2020 exams in November 2020.

We respectfully ask you to keep your sons/daughters at home during the midterm break, limit their contacts and encourage them to wear masks in public. Students could unknowingly bring the virus into the school community upon returning to school if they do not protect themselves and others.

Once again, I wish to thank everyone for all of the hard work and co-operation to date. We will hopefully have another successful Term 2 and we will continue to work hard to keep everyone safe. Thankfully, we did not have any of the specific hand sanitiser that was highlighted in a letter from the DES this morning. We are grateful to parents/guardians for discussing all of the public health advice with their son/daughter, e.g.; correct hand washing techniques, good respiratory etiquette for coughing/sneezing, the correct wearing of face masks...etc. We need your continued support and compliance to keep our staff and students safe and to ensure that our school stays open. We appreciate that this is a very challenging and worrying time for everyone. Our thoughts and prayers are with families who have experienced job loss or bereavement.

Sincere thanks and appreciation to you all! Stay safe.

Kind regards,

Janice Uí Bheoláin (Principal)



A parent's guide to close contacts

This guide sets out what to expect when your child has been told they are a close contact of Covid-19 in school.

The HSE is working closely with schools to make sure the health of all children and staff in the school is protected. If a person has been diagnosed with Covid-19, the HSE will identify everyone who has been in close contact with the person with Covid-19. This includes the parents/guardians of all children as well as any staff who were in close contact with the person.

Close contact

If your child has been identified as a close contact, it means they have been in contact with someone who has Covid-19. Please try not to worry. The risk of your child becoming infected with Covid-19 from this close contact is small. Less than 2 children in 100 children tested as close contacts are found to have Covid-19 too. Even if your child does become infected with the virus, most children don't get any symptoms, or have a very mild illness.

My child is a close contact

The school will contact you to bring your child home from school, if they are identified as a close contact. Please make sure the school has your most up-to-date contact information so they can call you if your child needs to be picked up.

You will naturally be concerned, but if your child has no symptoms of Covid-19, please follow the advice below. If your child has symptoms of Covid-19, please immediately isolate your child and ring your GP.

My child's COVID-19 test

Keep your phone close to you and make sure it is switched on. The HSE will contact you to organise coronavirus testing for your child free of charge. You will receive a text message with details of the test appointment location, date and time. Most people receive their test result within 2 days.

The HSE will arrange a free COVID-19 test for your child and contact you with the appointment. Do not ring your GP, unless your child developed symptoms.

Restricting your child's movements

Your child must restrict their movements for 14 days, since they were last in close contact with the person who has tested positive for Covid-19. The HSE will tell you the date the 14 days of restricted movements will finish.

Restricting movements means avoiding contact with other people and social situations as much as possible. During the 14 days restricted movements your child cannot:

- attend school, childcare or any group activities
- use public transport
- visit other people's homes or have visitors to your home

Your child can go outside to attend a medical appointment or to exercise as long as they keep 2 metres distance from other people.

The rest of the household

If your child who is a close contact is feeling well, with no symptoms of COVID-19, other people in the household do not need to restrict their movements. They can continue to go to work, school, preschool or childcare. But, if they have also been told they are also a close contact of COVID-19, they would then need to restrict their movements.

If your child tests negative (COVID-19 virus not found)

If your child, who is a close contact with no symptoms of COVID-19, receives a negative result, they still need to restrict their movements:

- for 14 days, or
- until the date you were told to restrict their movements until

This is because it can take up to 2 weeks to develop infection of COVID-19.

If your child tests positive (COVID-19 virus found)

Your child will need to self-isolate (stay in their room) if their test result is positive (COVID-19 virus found).

People in your household will need to restrict their movements (stay at home) for 14 days. Household siblings cannot attend school and adults at home should not go to work.

You, or whoever is the main carer of the child in self-isolation, will need to restrict your movements for 17 days. This includes the 10 days that your child is in isolation and for 7 days after your child's isolation period ends.

Your child must self-isolate until:

- they have not had a high temperature (38 degrees Celsius or over) for 5 days
AND
- it has been 10 days since they first developed symptoms

If your child has no symptoms, they can stop self-isolating 10 days from the date of their test.

If your child develops symptoms of COVID-19 after a negative result

If your child had a negative (COVID-19 virus was not detected) test result but later goes on to develop [COVID-19 symptoms](#), isolate your child and phone your GP.

Explain to your GP that your child was tested as a close contact of a case of COVID-19 and they have now developed symptoms of COVID-19. The GP will discuss referring your child for another free coronavirus test.

If your child develops [COVID-19 symptoms](#), people in your household need to restrict their movements now and stay at home. This includes not attending school or work.

If your child develops symptoms of Covid-19 after a positive result

If your child develops [symptoms of COVID-19](#), but has already had a positive result from their close contact test, then they do not need to be tested again. The symptoms for COVID-19 can start after the positive/'detected' test result.

You must keep your child isolated (you may need to isolate with them) and use all infection control measures possible to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the house e.g. distancing as much as physically possible, hand washing, covering your mouth and nose if you cough, keeping surfaces clean and avoiding touching your face.

People in the household need to restrict their movements and stay at home. This includes not attending school or work.

If your child's symptoms get worse

Phone your GP or GP out of hours service immediately if your child's symptoms of COVID-19 get worse.

Privacy

The school cannot share the name of the child or staff member who tested positive (COVID-19 detected). This information is private and confidential. Close contacts will not be told the name of the person with COVID-19 unless the parent or guardian of the child or member of staff gives permission.

Where do I go for more information?

Up to date information and advice on COVID-19 (coronavirus) is available on [hse.ie](https://www.hse.ie). If you have any queries you can call HSELive on 1850 24 1850 from 8am – 8pm Monday to Friday and 10am – 5pm on Saturday. You can also contact the HSE by email on hselive@hse.ie

Useful websites

<https://www.gov.ie/en/>

<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>

<https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/child-close-contact-covid-19-school.html>